

Immediate Benefits

The Affordable

Care Act has numerous provisions which take effect in 2010. Many of these provisions help to individuals who struggle to find insurance, including young adults and early retirees. Other provisions begin to reign in some of the worst practices of health insurance companies. Many of these provisions will start in July or September of this year.

Here is a short list and links to more information about the provisions. Check back often, as this page will be updated as more information is made available.

- **SMALL BUSINESS TAX CREDITS**- Tax credits are made available to small businesses to make employee coverage more affordable. Tax credits of up to 35 percent of premiums will be available to firms that choose to offer coverage. Credits are available starting this year.

- **START TO CLOSE THE MEDICARE PART D DONUT HOLE**- Seniors who reach the "donut hole" under Medicare Part D will receive a \$250 rebate to in 2010. Beginning in 2011, institutes a 50% discount on prescription drugs in the donut hole; also completely closes the donut hole by 2020.

- **HELP FOR UNINSURED AMERICANS WITH PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS UNTIL EXCHANGE IS AVAILABLE (INTERIM HIGH-RISK POOL)** -Provides access to affordable insurance for Americans who are uninsured because of a pre-existing condition through a temporary subsidized high-risk pool. Coverage will be available starting July 1.

- **EXTENDS COVERAGE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE UP TO 26th BIRTHDAY THROUGH PARENTS' INSURANCE**- Requires new health plans and certain grandfathered plans to allow young people up to their 26th birthday to remain on their parents' insurance policy, at the parents' choice. Effective September 23, 2010. Note: many insurance companies have began this provision early. Employer-sponsored plans can wait to make this change once a new plan year begins, so be sure to check with your insurer/employer to be sure.

- **HELP FOR EARLY RETIREES**- Creates a temporary reinsurance program (until the Exchanges are available) to help offset the costs of expensive premiums for employers and retirees for health benefits for retirees age 55-64. Effective starting June 1, 2010.

- **NO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN WITH PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS**-Prohibits new health plans in all markets plus grandfathered group health plans from denying coverage to children with pre-existing conditions. This begins for all new health plans offered after September 23, 2010.

- **ENDS RESCISSIONS**- Bans insurance companies from dropping people from coverage once they get sick. Effective starting September 23, 2010.

- **FREE PREVENTIVE CARE UNDER MEDICARE**- Eliminates co-payments for preventive services and exempts preventive services from deductibles under the Medicare program. Effective beginning January 1, 2011.

- **BANS LIFETIME LIMITS ON COVERAGE**- Prohibits health insurance companies from placing lifetime caps on coverage. Effective for plans which begin after September 23, 2010.

- **NEW, INDEPENDENT APPEALS PROCESS**- Ensures consumers in new plans have access to an effective internal and external appeals process to appeal decisions by their health insurance plan. Effective September 23, 2010.

- **ENSURES VALUE FOR PREMIUM PAYMENTS**- Requires plans in the individual and small group market to spend 80 percent of premium dollars on medical services, and plans in the large group market to spend 85 percent. Insurers that do not meet these thresholds must provide rebates to policyholders. Effective on January 1, 2011.

- HOLDS INSURANCE COMPANIES ACCOUNTABLE FOR UNREASONABLE RATE
HIKES- Creates a grant program to support States in requiring health
insurance companies to submit justification for all requested premium increases,
and insurance companies with excessive or unjustified premium exchanges may not
be able to participate in the new Health Insurance Exchanges. Starting in
plan year 2011.

The Department Of Health and Human Services has created a new
Office of Consumer Information and
Insurance Oversight
which will monitor many of the major provisions of the
historic health reform bill. I encourage you to check out their website for
updated information in the coming weeks and months -